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In defense of the CIA

by ALVIN H. HARDT

feel that those of us who support the CIA feel deeply that a strong national intelligence apparatus is positively essential for the United States to survive, should try to answer CIA critics.

Gen. Vernon Walters, "outsider" who came to CIA four years ago as deputy director, recently said this to say:

I can tell you that I never cease to be startled at the competence, at the integrity, and most of all, the dedication, of the people there. They're Americans just like every- body else in this room."

He also spoke of members of that agency who have fallen in the service of the United States—unhonored, unknown by most, but nonetheless just as truly heroes as anybody else who died anywhere else, that I might continue to be free."

Mistakes

Obviously the CIA has made some mistakes. Some have occurred because of unique and diversified activities required in intelligence work make it difficult to define exact moral and legal limits.

The CIA is criticized for many of which occurred in the fifties and sixties—the past.

Reforms may be needed, but in making them we should look to the future

Opinion

Alvin H. Hardt is a native of Honolulu and a former resident of San Antonio. He served in the OSS during World War II and then worked for the CIA until his retirement in 1970.



HARDT

and ask: are we to maintain strong intelligence and military organization, or will we cease being a free and democratic nation?

The CIA has been operating 28 years. Considering this long period, and all its accomplishments, most of which are not revealed, its errors are miniscule.

Secrecy

A recent Harris poll showed persons contacted voted favorably, 78 to 12 per cent: "The U.S. must have the best foreign intelligence service in the world, even if it makes some mistakes."

They also agreed (71 to 13 per cent): "Any successful foreign intelligence must be operated in secrecy."

Criticism of the CIA in Congress and in the media exceeds common sense, and some critics attack the agency with rancor.

To be consistent, many of these critics concurrently call for reduction in military expenditures.

How can they be so naive or complacent about communism when everyone knows how Russia ruthlessly crushed Hungary and took over Czechoslovakia and others?

We know Russia's awesome KGB operates all over the world without any restrictions whatsoever.

Liberals

These same liberals would emasculate the intelligence organizations and the FBI, or at least completely con-

But just about every matter which recently was revealed to congressional committees in secrecy was leaked almost immediately.

This included items which the committee chairman had promised, and requested, to keep secret.

This demonstrates that if committee approval is required beforehand any disagreeing member of a congressional oversight, or control, committee can cancel an intelligence project. He would simply leak information and kill the project.

Recently columnist Tom Wicker quoted William Rusher with some straightforward comments in support of continuing CIA covert activities.

Wicker followed with his own rather shallow reasons for discontinuing covert work.

The case

He concluded by saying, "The case for covert operations is essentially that they're doing it to us, so we have to do it to them."

We are "doing it to them" to keep aggressors from taking or controlling helpless small nations, and eventually threatening the same for the United States and the rest of the world.

Sen. Frank Church was quoted as saying his investigating committee found evidence the "CIA has

1967 guidelines laid down by President Johnson which prohibit covert relationships, direct or indirect, with any of our nation's institutions."

Some newspapers did not carry this assuring statement on page one as they did the original story accusing the CIA of wrongdoing in this area.

Another example: Air Force Col. Fletcher Prouty said Alexander Butterfield had been a CIA spy in the White House.

This got an eight-column headline. A retraction rated one column.

Many liberals condemn the CIA and our government for interfering in policies and governments of other nations.

At the same time they advise us that the United States should castigate and ostracize dictatorial governments, such as Chile and the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Apparently interference is all right if it suits these critics.

Seemingly Mr. Wicker is the foremost advocate of a "destroy CIA" campaign.

How can a learned man make an imbecilic statement, such as insinuating, if not stating, that James Schlesinger, while director of the CIA might have had reason to fear for his life from within the agency?

American covert intelligence consists mostly of such operations as training small nations to defend themselves, rather than have us fight their battles.

It could be the difference

Losing a little openness and privacy is better than losing it all

between using six agents and \$5,000 or risking the lives of 5,000 U.S. Marines

Nothing new

There is nothing new about having covert intelligence.

It has been practiced throughout history. George Washington certainly used it.

He said, "secrecy, complete secrecy, is essential for intelligence to be effective."

He made three different attempts to kidnap Benedict Arnold, and you can guess what would have happened if the kidnap had succeeded.

Benjamin Franklin ran a mail-interception service on the British from 1772-1775.

Bicentennial

In this Bicentennial year we might reflect upon the resolute spirit of our forefathers who gave us the most democratic and free land in history.

They stand out as giants compared to those who easily criticize and rob us all pride and confidence.

This especially affects our youth who mostly remember the unfavorable events of the last few years.

The head of our FBI recently spoke of the far increasing problem of terrorism in America.

He indicated that necessary laws or restrictions might curtail our privacy and freedom just a little. And so it is with intelligence.

Losing a little privacy and openness is so much better than losing it all.

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